

November 17, 2014

Breaking the Silence:
International Activities, September 2012- November 2014

The Israeli NGO known as [Breaking the Silence](#) (BtS) describes its [mission](#) as “**expos[ing] the Israeli public** to the routine situations of everyday life in the Occupied Territories.... **pushing Israeli society** to face the reality whose creation it has enabled” (emphasis added).

[Funders in 2012/2013](#) include [European Union](#), [Spain](#) (via AECID), [Netherlands](#) (via [ICCO](#)), [Belgium](#) (via [Broederlijk Delen](#)), [UK](#) (via [Christian Aid](#)), [Denmark](#) (via [Dan Church Aid](#)), [Germany](#) (via [Medico International](#)), [Ireland](#) (via [Trocaire](#)), [Norway](#), the [Open Society Institute](#), and the [New Israel Fund](#).

Through repeated allegations of “war crimes” and “violations of international law,” many of the organization’s activities reinforce the 2001 [Durban Strategy](#), which crystallized the tactics of BDS (boycott, divestments and sanctions), delegitimizing Israel as “an apartheid regime,” and international isolation.

BtS makes sweeping accusations based on anecdotal, anonymous, and unverifiable accounts of low-level soldiers. These “testimonies” lack context, are politically biased, and erase the complicated reality in the West Bank. In addition, they reflect a distorted interpretation of the conflict in order to advance the political agenda of BtS activists, thereby fueling the international demonization campaign against Israel. (For a detailed analysis of this dimension, see “[Breaking What Silence? A Critical Reading of Allegations from ‘Breaking the Silence.’](#)” NGO Monitor Report, February 1, 2011)

Despite claiming to address Israeli society, BtS’s lobbying and media advocacy focus on international audiences, including [appearances](#) in Europe and the United States. Yehuda Shaul, BtS co-founder, [defended the practice](#) of generating international pressure: “Sometimes, when you want to deliver messages to the inside, you must go outside.”

Activities targeting international audiences, as shown in the following table, include:

- Speaking tours at more than 15 American university campuses, including in California and New York, where BDS initiatives were in progress.
- [Numerous articles](#) in international media platforms – in France, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, UK, and the US – during the Gaza War, contributing to demonization campaigns and false allegations of “war crimes.”
- An October 21, 2013 [presentation](#) to the [virulently anti-Israel and antisemitic](#) UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at which the Palestinian deputy representative to the UN [asked](#) BtS “to do more speaking engagements, particularly in the United States.”

- A photo exhibition, purporting to portray “[the day-to-day reality of service](#)” in the West Bank, accompanied by members of BtS who conduct guided tours through the exhibition. Promoting a June 2014 exhibit in Dublin, Yehuda Shaul [claimed](#): “The photographs and testimony refute the false claim that the horrors of the occupation are the exception rather than the norm.” At the [Stockholm Army Museum in March 2011](#), BtS member Itamar Shapira told a reporter, “We are the oppressors, we are the ones that are violating human rights on a daily basis. We are creating the terror against us, basically... This is a war against civilians, a war against society.” The exhibit has travelled throughout Europe and the United States.
- A highly tendentious book titled [Occupation of the Territories - Israeli Soldier testimonies 2000-2010](#) (later called *Our Harsh Logic*), which was translated into [Swedish](#), [German](#), [French](#), and [Dutch](#). NGO Monitor analysis has revealed that this book is premised on predetermined “analyses” that falsely portray Israeli actions as “terrorizing the civilian population.” The launching of the book in various languages serves as a platform for further demonization and delegitimization of Israel, including accusations of “racism” and alleged “political assassinations” of Palestinians, claims that Gaza is still “occupied,” and the implication that Israel is ethnically cleansing “Area C.”
- Participation in a June 2013 [conference](#) organized by [Defence for Children International – Palestine Section](#) (DCI-PS), a Palestinian NGO that is active in allegations of Israeli violations and advancing BDS campaigns. The event was aimed at “raising awareness on the situation of Palestinian children being deprived of their liberty,” and BtS representative Avihai Stollar alleged that “violence was part of the soldiers’ behaviour, when arresting minors.”
- In March/April 2013, Yehuda Shaul, met with a delegation from the South African Parliament, geared towards promoting a pro-BDS agenda in South Africa. According to the “[draft report](#)” of the delegation’s visit, “[Shaul] told the Committee delegation that during the war their mindset as soldiers was always ‘playing defence’ but in reality they were ‘playing offence’...For him, what became clear was that their main objective was to repaint the green line... He said that **he agreed with the intention of the BDS movement** but he felt that its approach could compromise the goal. He elaborated that internal work needed to be done, external work was also needed” (pp. 33-34, emphasis added).
- Participated in the “[Open Hillel](#)” Conference in Cambridge, MA (October 11-13, 2014). The conference sought to compel the large Jewish campus organization Hillel International to drop its [guidelines](#) that proscribe partnerships with groups that “[d]eny the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders.” These guidelines are essential “[to build an enduring commitment to Jewish life, learning and Israel](#).”
- Regular [English-language tours](#) to Hebron and South Hebron Hills, also aimed at non-Israeli audiences.

Breaking the Silence International Activities

Event	Location	Date
Photo exhibit	Willy Brandt Haus, Berlin, headquarters of German Social Democratic Party	9/2012
Book release in German	Germany	9/14/2012
Tour of Midwest Universities	Including Bard College , Fordham University , Oberlin , University of Chicago , and Carleton College	Fall 2012
Tour of West Coast Universities	Including UC Berkeley, Stanford , UCLA , Occidental College , and UC San Diego	Fall 2012
Australia Book launch	Sydney	9/2012
Breaking the Silence on ABC-TV's The Drum	Australia	10/23/2012
Avner Gvaryahu speaking at the UN	United Nations	Published 10/22/ 2013
Tour in West Bank with Peter Slezak, boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigner and anti-Israel Activist	Radio National, Australia	1/2012
Interview on German radio	Germany	2/4/2013
Campus Presentation	University of Pennsylvania	3/28/2013
Swedish book launch	Sweden	4/16-22/2013
Breaking the Silence in "This American Life" (min 6:30 and on), radio program (NPR and others)	USA	4/19/2013
Limmud event	Germany	5/2013

Conference titled " The Situation of Palestinian Children Detained in Israeli Military Detention System. "	The Graduate Institute, Geneva	6/2013
Book Launch at J Street Conference	Washington DC	9/29/2013
University event	John Hopkins University	10/10/2013
French translation of book, "Our Harsh Logic"	France	Published 10/9/2013
Conference	ULB (Universite Libre de Bruxelles)	10/14/2013
FRANCE 24's radio interview	France	10/20/2013
CBC Radio, Sunday Edition, "Inside Israel's Army"	Canada	10/20/2013
UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	UN Headquarters in New York	10/21/2013
University Book Tour	Including Wesleyan , Brandeis , Harvard	10-11/2013
Public lecture	Cape Town, South Africa	8/2013
Advocacy tour	Harvard and New York University , as well as additional locations throughout Washington and California	10-11/2013
Yehuda Shaul interview during a joint investigation by ABC's Four Corners and <i>The Australian</i> newspaper titled " Stone Cold Justice ," which claimed to reveal "evidence that shows that the army is targeting Palestinian boys for arrest and detention."	ABC News/ <i>The Australian</i> newspaper	2/2014
University event	Washington University	3/2014
Photography exhibit	Dublin	6/19-29/2014
Panel discussion	Dublin	6/25/2014

“Lunchtime talk”	Belfast	6/23/2014
Series of articles in international media outlets	France, Norway, Netherlands, Spain, and UK	August 2014 (Gaza War)
Open Hillel conference	Harvard University	10/12/2014
University event	ULB (Universite Libre de Bruxelles)	11/5/2014